

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, Congressman Joe Sestak joined his colleagues on the House Education and Labor Committee in marking up and passing H.R. 2343, the Education Begins at Home Act. This markup makes the bill eligible for a vote on the House floor. The bill authorizes \$150 million in FY 2009 for five years to provide grants to establish and expand early childhood home visiting programs, and \$40 million in competitive grants for programs that aid children with limited-English proficiency and military families. — At least 37 states currently have such home visitation programs, and a pilot program for home visitation has already been funded for military families. These programs include visits to parents and children in their home by personnel who convey parenting and child development information, provide health screenings, offer support and provide training.

“I have long stated that national security begins at home, in the education of our populace,” said Congressman Sestak. “By investing in the early education of our nation’s children, we are not only enhancing their personal and educational development, but also bolstering the quality of our future citizens and future workforce.”

This legislation further strengthens the early childhood home visitation component of Early Head Start by integrating best practices from the field of home visiting.

The bill provides funding to states, tribes, and territories so that they may use the funds to provide voluntary early childhood home visitation services at least once a month. Funding will be allocated based on the proportion of children under 5 in families under the poverty line.

The use of these programs have shown improved performance and behavior throughout K-12 levels, reduction in reported rates of child abuse, more positive health outcomes, and early identification of developmental delays.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security

Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.